

BASIS CRSP External Evaluation Panel Report, 1996-1998



B A S I S

■
Broadening Access and Strengthening Input Market Systems

October 1998

BASIS CRSP External Evaluation Panel Report, 1996-1998

Broadening Access and Strengthening Input Market Systems

Provided by the BASIS Management Entity
The Land Tenure Center
1357 University Ave.
Madison, WI 53715
Tel: (608) 262-3657
Fax: (608) 262-2141
Email: basis-me@facstaff.wisc.edu
<http://www.wisc.edu/ltc/basis.html>

October 1998

This publication was made possible through support provided by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), under the terms of Grant No. LAG-A-00-96-90016-00.

All views, interpretations, recommendations, and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the external evaluators and not necessarily those of the supporting or cooperating institutions. This report has been formatted to conform with the *BASIS Reports* series but the contents have not been edited.

Produced on behalf of the Consortium for Applied Research on Market Access (CARMA) by the BASIS Management Entity, the Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

CARMA members. Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin–Madison; Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID); Institute for Development Anthropology (IDA); Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS), University of Maryland; International Center for Research on Women (ICRW); International Resource Group (IRG); Land Tenure Center (LTC), University of Wisconsin–Madison; Land Tenure Service, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Michigan State University (MSU); Rural Development Institute (RDI); Rural Finance Program, the Ohio State University (OSU); Tuskegee University; Winrock Associates; Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University (IU); World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU).

Host-country institutions collaborating with CARMA. *Central America:* Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO); Fundación para el Desarrollo Económico (FUNDE); Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUSADES); Universidad Centro Americana (UCA). *Central Asia:* Cabinet of Ministers of the Uzbek Republic; Ministry of Agriculture and Management (Uzbekistan); Scriabin Agricultural Academy (Kyrgyzstan); Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers (TIAME); Uzbek Research Institute for Market Reform (URIRM); Uzbek Scientific-Production Center of Agriculture. *Greater Horn of Africa:* African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS); Institute of Development Research (IDR), Addis Ababa University; Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA); Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development of Egerton University. *Southern Africa:* Centre for Applied Social Science, University of Zimbabwe; Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi; Institute of Natural Resources (INR), University of Natal; Núcleo de Estudos da Terra (NET), Eduardo Mondlane University; Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAS), University of Western Cape.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
ACRONYMS	v
A note of appreciation	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
I. EVALUATION OF STATUS/EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	3
A. Collaboration/cooperation between and among U.S. (CARMA) and host country institutions and personnel	3
1. Observations	3
2. Recommendations	3
B. Interest, involvement and support of USAID missions and other donors	3
1. Observations	3
2. Recommendations	3
C. Evidence of institutionalization in host country	4
1. Observations	4
2. Recommendations	4
II. EVALUATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS	5
A. Research Objectives	5
1. Current situation	5
2. General observations	6
3. Recommendations	7
B. Research design and progress	8
1. Current situation	8
2. General observations	9
3. Recommendations	10
C. Results	10
1. Current situation	10
2. General observations	10
3. Recommendations	11
III. EVALUATION OF PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS	13
1. Observations	13
2. Recommendations	14
IV. EVALUATION OF FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT	17
A. Funding of Fiscal and Administrative Management	17
1. Observations	17
2. Recommendations	17
B. Adequacy of Current financial Management, Policies and Procedures	18
1. Observations	18
2. Recommendations	18
C. Financial Contributions of Collaborating Institutions	18
1. Observations	18
2. Recommendations	19
D. Administrative and Management Structure of BASIS	19

1. Observations	19
2. Recommendations	19
V. EVALUATION OF BASIS CRSP AS A WHOLE	21
1. Observations	21
2. Recommendations	22

ACRONYMS

BASIS	Broadening Access and Strengthening Input Market Systems
BOD	Board of Directors
CARMA	Consortium for Applied Research on Market Access
CRSP	Collaborative Research Support Program
EEP	External Evaluation Panel
ME	Management Entity
TC	Technical Committee
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

The External Evaluation Panel (EEP), composed of Sara S. Berry of Johns Hopkins University and Jean Ruley Kearns of the University of Arizona and the Consortium for International Development, met on August 12-13, 1998 with members of the BASIS CRSP management entity. The third member of the Panel, Louise Palmer Fortmann, is currently on a leave of absence.

The meetings were held at the Land Tenure Center on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. During the two day period the EEP met with representatives of BASIS and/or the University of Wisconsin: Michael Roth, Danielle Hartmann, Steve Smith, Kurt Brown, John Bruce and Ken Shapiro who represented BASIS and/or the University of Wisconsin. Technical Advisor, Deborah Rubin who works in the office of G/EGAD/AFS at USAID, attended the meetings. The Panel members discussed the work of BASIS with personnel other than those available on campus during the August meetings.

The arrangements for the meetings at the Land Tenure Center were excellent. BASIS information, documents and reports were provided to the EEP in a timely manner and the logistics for the meetings were arranged so that the maximum amount of work could be done in the minimum amount of time.

Special appreciation is expressed to Danielle Hartmann of the arrangements and to Steve Smith, and Kurt Brown for their ability to provide information as requested very quickly. Thanks go to Ken Shapiro and John Bruce for discussing the place of BASIS in the university system. Michael Roth received particular thanks for his technical interpretation of the work of the project and his knowledge of the history of BASIS.

INTRODUCTION

The following document represents the first external evaluation of the BASIS CRSP activity. The External Evaluation Panel (EEP) was composed of Dr. Sara Berry and Dr. Jean Ruley Kearns. The Panel conducted interviews with members of the BASIS CRSP management entity, USAID and technical personnel. In addition to interviews, the Panel reviewed documents, reports, plans and other BASIS related information.

It is important that this evaluation be viewed as a snapshot in time. The information on which this evaluation is based was valid on August 12 and 13, 1998. Due to various events, the EEP has not operated as an ongoing evaluation body and members of the Panel and BASIS have not worked together previously on this CRSP. Due to the nature of this evaluation process (brief interaction, one face-to-face meeting, lack of interaction with other BASIS groups such as the Technical Committee, and the need to make decisions within a relatively limited time frame) it is vital to consider the recommendations and observations in this evaluation to be part of an ongoing process in the future so that the assessments be of optimum value.

The Panel attempted to view the BASIS CRSP in as large a picture as possible and to frame recommendations in as helpful a manner as possible. After saying that, the Panel acknowledges that there may be some recommendations that are unworkable as presently stated. However, it is also the Panel's intention to help identify issues which the BASIS participants can then address.

An activity such as the BASIS CRSP is a dynamic situation with a healthy amount of unknowns. The key to a successful activity continues to be careful yet flexible planning plus an aptitude for tackling a large amount of work while determining priorities. The External Evaluation Panel looks forward to continuing to observe the progress of the BASIS CRSP and acknowledges the significant work that has already been accomplished.

I. EVALUATION OF STATUS/EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

A. COLLABORATION/COOPERATION BETWEEN AND AMONG U.S. (CARMA) AND HOST COUNTRY INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONNEL

1. OBSERVATIONS

As expected from a relatively complicated structure which involves U.S. and non-U.S. entities, the development of a collaborative/cooperative situation is one which requires ongoing attention. The amount of time which should be devoted to fostering collaboration/cooperation is significant. The bulk of the leadership in this area rests with the ME which appears to be over committed at the present time. However, the Regional Program Leaders have assumed a significant amount of responsibility for linking non-U.S. organizations on technical matters. The combination of technical leadership requirements, management issues and funding limitations are factors which impact the amount of time which the ME can provide supporting collaboration between and among U.S. and host country institutions and personnel. One approach to this has been the decentralization of elements of program management to include Program leaders.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of keeping all relevant institutions informed of CRSP activities while fostering an atmosphere of team is obvious. It is recommended that the ME continue efforts to foster communications between cooperating institutions and to be alert to possible opportunities for building team spirit.

B. INTEREST, INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT OF USAID MISSIONS AND OTHER DONORS

1. OBSERVATIONS

Funding issues continue to be of concern and it appears that this will continue. Mission add-ons appear to be slower than anticipated. In particular, the regional missions have generally been very reluctant to bring funding into the CRSP. Most regional missions have not shown any interest in involving the CRSP in their programs. An exception to this is the Nairobi regional mission which has been an important contributor to the Horn of Africa program. AID/GHAI and AID/BHR have also made important contributions. Generally, this is an area which needs attention by the CRSP personnel as well as the USAID Project Officer. At the present time the role of non-USAID donors in the CRSP has been minor.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional missions must be targeted to receive information, specific to this program which would be within the capabilities of the CRSP. For example, since the Asian missions do not have

agriculture as part of their planning, it will be important for the CRSP to show relevance of proposed work to the overpowering problems in the area without directly relating to agriculture.

It is relatively clear that due to the lack of sufficient time on the part of CRSP leadership, other donors have been approached but more needs to be done. However, due to the tight funding situation it is recommended that the BOD, together with AID, review other donor possibilities. Regional research leaders should be encouraged to meet with World Bank, UNAP, IDB, ADB, and AFDB representatives in host countries to inform them of the CRSP work and to explore possible areas for funding from those donors. Piggy backing research activities should be encouraged. When discussing this issue, the BASIS Director noted that potential benefits for these recommended actions need to be weighed against the high transaction costs involved in the efforts.

C. EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN HOST COUNTRY

1. OBSERVATIONS

While there is some evidence at this time that the institutionalization process may be underway it is really too early in the implementation phase to expect significant progress on this topic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the researchers in the regional programs be requested to provide information about institutionalization in their annual activity reports.

II. EVALUATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS

BASIS CRSP includes six main components: five regional programs and one on the microeconomic foundations of input market analysis. Research Program Leaders have made extensive efforts to build collaborative relationships among researchers and policy-makers in host country institutions and CARMA universities in order to ensure that research projects carried out under the auspices of BASIS CRSP reflect both local priorities and policy needs and those of US-based scholars and policy-makers. While there are important commonalities in research themes and methods across the five regional programs and the Factor Market Nexus (formerly the Global Research Program), there are also, necessarily, significant differences: in research questions, choice of research design and methods, balance between research capacity building, data collection and analysis, and rates of progress in producing research results.

A. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. CURRENT SITUATION

BASIS CRSP seeks to advance understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of factor market liberalization in developing countries; the extent to which factor market liberalization has contributed to agricultural productivity, food security and poverty alleviation; and the effectiveness of alternative policies for broadening factor market access. Because of regional differences in socio-economic conditions, policy priorities, institutional capacities, and researchers' interests and expertise, particular research topics and approaches vary considerably across the component programs. To the extent that these variations reflect local differences in market structures and socio-economic performance, they enrich the potential for BASIS to make significant contributions to knowledge about factor market liberalization in general. To realize this potential, effective measures will be needed to compare and synthesize results across the six component programs.

Central America. Focussing on a single country, El Salvador, BASIS is carrying out research on land market reform, access to financial services for the rural poor, and the dynamics of rural poverty and human capital formation. Research is focussed on three topics: 1) Transfers of land from inefficient agricultural cooperatives to individuals and households and the effects of such transfers on land distribution, agricultural productivity and household incomes; 2) financial market innovations for the rural poor and their effects on access to credit, output, and household incomes; and 3) dynamics of poverty and human capital formation in the context of political and economic stabilization and factor market liberalization.

Greater Horn of Africa. To date, this program has focussed primarily on Ethiopia, with complementary research activities planned for Kenya. Two major research projects are underway: 1) a study of the effects on household food security of exchanges of products, land, labor and assets—in rural market centers and across ecological zones—in a chronic food deficit area in the highlands of Ethiopia, and 2) a study of cross-border trade (in livestock and other commodities) and its effects on factor market access and food security, on Ethiopia's borders with Kenya and Djibouti, and Kenya's with Somalia.

Southern Africa. In contrast to other regions, where BASIS research activities are concentrated in a single country, local researchers and policy-makers urged BASIS to adopt a regional focus rather than concentrating on South Africa alone, as originally planned. The regional focus is meant to reduce researchers' isolation in the region (a legacy of apartheid) and take account of South Africa's dominant position in the regional economy. To create a regional research agenda, the program has developed a series of comparative projects. They include: 1) a comparative study of land transfers and their effects on land distribution, farm productivity and household incomes in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia; 2) a comparative study of water resource management and policy, and their implications for factor market access, water use and agricultural productivity, in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa; 3) a small planning grant for comparative analysis of livelihood systems, their sustainability and their contributions to poverty alleviation in Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Central Asia. Through a comparative study of similar agro-ecological zones in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, this program plans to analyze the institutional sources and economic effects of rapid versus gradual programs of factor market liberalization. Researchers hypothesize that risk, uncertainty, farmer attitudes and the choice of factor proportions in farm investment play a significant role both in explaining the pace of market reform, and in the extent to which market liberalization leads to farm restructuring and increases in agricultural productivity.

Southeast Asia. Having been obliged to abandon Cambodia as a primary research site in mid-1997, this program hopes to relocate to Vietnam. Selection of research themes awaits clarification of USAID objectives.

Factor Market Nexus. This program seeks to analyze the microeconomic foundations of factor market access and its consequences for household accumulation and income change. Two research projects are underway: 1) an analysis of the dynamics of rural household income and accumulation in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; and 2) a comparative study of land transfers, land accumulation and household production strategies in Mexico, Nicaragua and Honduras. The Factor Market Nexus is also supporting a case study of rural households' responses to long-term economic change in Mali.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Shifting research objectives. Research themes have been clarified but also altered, as Research Program Leaders have consulted with host governments, NGOs and USAID missions, and developed collaborative relationships with researchers in the host countries and at CARMA universities. Initially, water access and management were identified as important issues in Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, Central America and Central Asia, but only the **Southern Africa** program has selected this as a priority research topic. The **Central Asia** program has shifted from an initial focus on the effects of land and water access on farm restructuring to the question of appropriate factor proportions in farm restructuring, and given increased attention to differences in the pace of market reform in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In **El Salvador**, land transfers, financial access and rural poverty alleviation were selected as priority research issues from the start. However, linkages between the economic status of rural households, and macroeconomic variables such as non-agricultural employment and international migration and remittances—which were stressed in the reconnaissance report—receive little attention in

subsequent reports. The **Horn of Africa** program has retained its initial focus on market access, food security and exchange across ecological zones in Ethiopia, but added a second project on cross-border trade in livestock, and contemplates additional research on water access and conflict in Kenya. Finally, the **Global Program** has dropped its original plan to compare and synthesize research findings from the regional programs, to concentrate on longitudinal analysis of factor market access, household accumulation and poverty alleviation in South Africa and three Central American countries other than El Salvador.

In **El Salvador**, **Southern Africa** and the **Horn of Africa**, substantial progress has been made in selecting and clarifying specific research topics, in collaboration with local researchers and host governments. In **El Salvador** and **Southern Africa**, the component research projects are all clearly linked to the central theme of how changing factor market access affects households' economic status and prospects. In the **Horn of Africa**, this is also the case for the study of income and food security in South Wollo, but it is less clear how the study of cross-border trade in livestock will address relations between household income and factor market access. The **Central Asia** program has experienced difficulties in developing effective collaborative relationships with host country institutions, and has yet to develop a clearly focussed research agenda. It is not clear, for example, whether the project seeks to explain differences in the speed of factor market liberalization in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and assess their consequences for farm restructuring; to compare differences in farm investments and factor proportion choices between the two countries; or to speed up the pace of reform in Uzbekistan. The **South East Asia** program has not been able to develop a research agenda for Vietnam because of uncertainty about priorities of the USAID mission there.

Institutional dimensions of factor market access. All of the component programs intend their research to yield results which are relevant for policymaking and implementation. There is thus an implicit commitment to examine institutional constraints on and contributions to factor market access, as well as documenting changes in the volume and distribution of factor market transactions, and estimating their effects on output, productivity and incomes. However, the degree to which this commitment is articulated in the specification of research objectives varies a great deal from one BASIS program to another.

Institutional issues are clearly part of the research agenda in the proposed studies of water management in **Southern Africa** and financial institutions and land transfers in **El Salvador**. They do not figure at all in studies being carried out under the **Factor Market Nexus** program and are implicit, rather than clearly spelled out, in the others. The **Central Asia** program, in particular, offers rich possibilities for institutional analysis: by investigating the *process* as well as the *pace* of market liberalization, and explaining *how* the slower program of reform in Uzbekistan is making the transition easier for farmers (Second Reconnaissance Report, p. 7), this project could make a significant contribution to a dimension of market liberalization which is not well understood. To date, however, these questions have not been posed, let alone addressed, in the program's reports.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

To assist the regional programs in developing their respective research agendas, and strengthen the foundations for effective comparison and synthesis of research results from the component programs, BASIS should take steps now to clarify the research objectives of the program as a

whole, and create a mechanism for comparison and synthesis of anticipated results. Specifically, it would be helpful to

1. Clarify the importance of institutional change as a research objective vis a vis documentation and analysis of market indicators.
2. Recognize research capacity building as an objective, include as an indicator in the results framework, and acknowledge differences in the relative importance of research capacity building vis a vis data collection and analysis in different regional programs.
3. Specify themes for comparison and synthesis of research findings from the six component programs. The star diagram on p. 23 of the original proposal submitted to USAID by the Land Tenure Center on 3 May 1996 could serve as a useful starting point for this exercise.
4. Unless progress can be made soon on selecting a research agenda and designing projects for Vietnam, the South East Asia program should be dropped, and released research funds should be allocated to more viable programs.

B. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROGRESS

1. CURRENT SITUATION

Progress to date in carrying out research varies a good deal both among the component programs and within them. For some projects, data collection is nearing completion, while others are still in the planning stage. None has yet completed analysis of any particular body of data, or produced conclusions which could inform policymaking.

Central America. A re-study of rural households, first surveyed in 1995, was completed in Feb. 1998, and a second is planned for early 2000. The resulting panel data will be used in the study of the dynamics of rural poverty. A survey of rural borrowers was planned for May, and plans were well advanced to begin case studies of 1) a rural lending institution, and 2) the institutional framework for land redistribution and broadening land market access in El Salvador.

Horn of Africa. In 1998, researchers plan to complete analysis of secondary data on market access and food security in South Wollo, Ethiopia; take an inventory of activities and infrastructure in rural market centers; and interview focus groups and key informants in 30 villages to determine patterns of production and market access.

Collection of data on cross-border trade will focus on interviews with traders and other key informants at four locations on borders between Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Kenya/Somalia. It is scheduled to begin in mid-1998.

Southern Africa. The land transfer study will carry out annual census surveys of land transfers over a five year period, from 1998 to 2002, supplemented by sample surveys of household assets and incomes of new land market entrants in years 2 and 5. Land transfer surveys are scheduled for Zimbabwe, Namibia and KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. When completed, they will constitute a unique longitudinal database on land market restructuring.

The water management study will build on a pilot project currently underway in Zimbabwe (which compares public and private initiatives for new water management methods in two localities) to

design comparative studies of water management and allocation systems in Mozambique, Malawi and South Africa. The comparative project will explore links between changes in water management, land tenure and ownership, small farmers' access to credit and labor productivity.

A small planning grant has been made to develop a research proposal for a comparative study of sustainable livelihood systems and poverty alleviation in Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The proposal will build on the findings of a previous study in Botswana which used results of household income and expenditure surveys in 1985/6 and 1993/4.

Central Asia. This program has conducted one training workshop for local researchers on methods of rapid rural appraisal. In 1998, researchers plan another training workshop; a survey of farmers' attitudes towards restructuring; and reanalysis of farm-level data collected by the World Bank and the European Union, to evaluate cost-effectiveness of different capital-labor ratios in new farm equipment.

Factor Market Nexus. A rural household survey was carried out in KwaZulu-Natal in late 1997 and early 1998, and data analysis has begun for the study of the dynamics of rural poverty and sustainable livelihoods.

"Making markets work for the rural poor" will use survey data collected in Mexico between 1990 and 1997 as a basis for designing comparative studies in Nicaragua and Honduras. Data collection is expected to begin for these latter studies in 1999.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Regional programs have achieved very different rates of progress in research design and data collection. Some of these differences are clearly related to differences in the size and complexity of individual programs. It is easier, for example, to work in one small country such as El Salvador than in a large and complex region such as **Southern Africa**; it is also easier to develop effective collaborative relations with an established regional research network such as OSSREA in the **Greater Horn of Africa**, than in regions without such research infrastructures, such as **Southern Africa** or **Central Asia**. USAID missions' interest in BASIS primary research objectives also varies from region to region. In some areas, this has given rise to protracted negotiation over the selection of research issues while, in other cases, this stage of research planning has gone more smoothly and quickly.

In El Salvador, South Africa and, to some extent, Zimbabwe, researchers have been able to work with existing data sets to design and implement re-surveys or plan comparative studies in neighboring countries (**Southern Africa**). In other cases (**Horn of Africa**, water management study in **Southern Africa**, **Central Asia**), researchers have had to spend a longer time on preliminary inventories of physical and institutional infrastructure, or interviews with key informants, to determine how best to design further data collection. In **Central Asia**, meaningful progress on research design awaits clarification of research objectives.

Finally, even those projects which make explicit proposals to study institutional dimensions of market liberalization, and institutional contributions or constraints on market access, say relatively little about what kinds of information they plan to collect on institutional structures and dynamics, or how they will go about it. It is not entirely clear whether this apparent reticence to spell out methods for documenting and observing institutions reflects researchers' uncertainty about what

is required, their lack of interest in institutional issues, or USAID's insistence that quantitative data on economic transactions and outputs are the only kinds of results which matter.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

To expedite progress on research design and data collection, BASIS should:

1. Clarify research objectives in Central Asia and use them to develop a feasible research design.
2. Specify the amount of attention to be devoted to institutional issues in each project, and clarify proposed methods for studying institutions in projects where they are an important part of the research agenda. The latter should include studies of water management in **Southern Africa**; financial innovations and land transfer programs in **El Salvador**; and different rates and processes of market liberalization in **Central Asia**.

C. RESULTS

1. CURRENT SITUATION

To date, none of the research projects supported by the BASIS programs has been completed. However, descriptions of anticipated research results in workplans and progress reports suggest the need to distinguish more clearly among different kinds of results, and specify which kinds of results should be expected within the five year time frame of BASIS CRSP.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

For many of the research projects being undertaken by regional programs, it is still unclear what kinds of results are anticipated by the researchers, and how those results relate to USAID expectations. USAID appears to be interested in at least three different kinds of results:

- a) Monitoring and explanation of recent changes in factor market access, and the effects of such changes on productivity, food security and poverty alleviation. Results of this kind may be used to recommend new policies and/or changes in existing policies.
- b) Demonstrated impact of BASIS research results on (i) research capacity building and (ii) policymaking in host countries and other countries with USAID missions. Such outcomes could arise from research training and networking in host countries; dissemination of BASIS research results; and/or interaction between BASIS researchers, host governments and other policymaking institutions.
- c) Changes in factor market access, productivity and household incomes which *result* from policies inspired by BASIS research results and/or policy advice.

Each of these types of possible outcome would entail different activities on the part of researchers and collaborating institutions, require different allocations of BASIS funds, and involve very different time frames.

- a) It is reasonable to expect BASIS programs to produce policy relevant research findings [type (a)] in the first five years, assuming that the bulk of BASIS funding goes to support research.

- b) To ensure that type (a) results have a meaningful influence on policy [type (b)], BASIS personnel would have to devote time and resources to working with policymakers—activities which could divert resources from research per se. To realize the full benefit of BASIS research projects, efforts to effect policy change would have to await production of research results [type (a)] and could not begin, therefore, until near the end of the five year research time frame, or afterwards.
- c) Finally, to chart the effects of BASIS-inspired policy changes on socio-economic practices [type (c)] further research would be needed *after* policy changes had taken place and begun to impact socio-economic behavior and conditions. It is not realistic to expect type (c) results within the five-year time frame of BASIS CRSP.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clarify the type(s) of results anticipated from BASIS component programs by the end of the five-year funding period. BASIS research programs should concentrate on increasing knowledge about constraints on factor market access, methods of broadening access, and the effects of broader access on output, food security and poverty alleviation. If some BASIS researchers are also able to effect changes in policy which incorporate the results of their own research, that would constitute further evidence of the significance of their research findings, but it is not realistic to expect that this will happen for every component program and research project. It is quite unrealistic to expect that BASIS programs to carry out original research, lobby successfully for policy changes commensurate with their findings, *and* conduct a second round of research to document and analyze the effects of such policy changes.
2. The five-year time frame for BASIS CRSP allows for the production of longitudinal data sets which permit researchers to describe and analyze actual changes in factor market access and economic outcomes, rather than making inferences from cross-section data, which can be misleading. Projects which are carrying out longitudinal data collection include studies of land transfers in **Southern Africa**; dynamics of poverty and household accumulation (**Factor Market Nexus** and **El Salvador**); and responses to long-term economic change in Mali (**Factor Market Nexus**). Such research results are extremely valuable for policymaking purposes and should be recognized as a significant benefit of BASIS research.
3. The five year time frame also allows for observation and analysis of the performance of institutions over time, with similar potential benefits for understanding how the *mechanisms* by which factor market access is broadened (or constricted), as well as the fact of broadened access per se, may influence resulting changes in productivity, incomes and food security. This, too, should be recognized as a potentially significant outcome of BASIS research and included in work plans and reports of research results. *In general, collection and analysis of longitudinal data on economic indicators and institutions should not be sacrificed in order to produce quick policy recommendations from research based on rapid rural appraisal. Studies of the latter type are abundant. BASIS chief potential for producing results of lasting significance derives from its commitment to basic, particularly longitudinal, research.*
4. A mechanism should be created now to think through the kinds of results which might be expected from the project as a whole, as well as from each component program, and begin

planning for comparison and synthesis of results from the regional and Factor Market Nexus programs, as they become available.

III. EVALUATION OF PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The unique design of the BASIS CRSP, together with the objectives of the activity, combine to emphasize the importance of communications both internal and external to the project. Basic to the work of the CRSP is an inherent need to spread information so as to encourage integration, use of lessons learned, and the utilization of expertise most effectively. It is therefore important to establish publication and communication systems which will meet a variety of needs while serving different audiences/participants.

1. OBSERVATIONS

CRSP management apparently recognized the importance of a communications system early and the Reconnaissance Mission Reports were published in 1997. These Reports led to the development and publication of the regional research and training programs in the following months. In the initial phase of the project the emphasis was on getting information gathered, written and distributed and the reports during this time appeared to be utilitarian and of a working nature (as they should have been).

Later, project management recognized the need to standardize the publications and six components were developed as part of the BASIS Publications Series. These components include the following:

1. *BASIS Reports*
2. *BASIS Progress*
3. *BASIS Research*
4. *BASIS Brief*
5. *Profile*
6. *BASIS Update*

Each component is described on the BASIS website and individual copies are available by contacting the BASIS Program Coordinator. At the same time the component publications were identified and contents described, the covers and content layouts were addressed and formalized. The result is a series of publications which are attractive, readable, and informative.

Other communication areas which are important to the work of the BASIS CRSP are as follows:

- Communications with Missions. This varies from region to region. The USAID Project Officer has most of the burden to communicate CRSP information to the Missions. During the early part of 1998, the Project Officer developed a system by which she distributes information to the missions.
- Communications with the USAID Project Officer. This varies from individual to individual. It appears that frequently, information goes directly to the Project Officer without ME input. Basically there is a need for specific procedures.

- Spreading the word about the CRSP. Generally there are limitations in this area. A fair amount of information spread was accomplished in the first year of the project. During the past year the attention focused on getting the research activities underway. However, there is a need to get more information to the missions and regional bureaus on an ongoing basis.
- Communications about CRSP administration. This appears to be relatively good. Information about administrative procedures appears to be shared broadly within the CRSP. Procedures are developed in a pragmatic way and are responsive to needs.
- Communications with relevant group. The CRSP has conducted planning workshops which targeted host country groups. These workshops appear to have been successful in getting the information spread, especially in the initial phase of activity. Communication with peer researchers occurs via a researcher to researcher network and peer review of research reports. Distribution of information appears to be good in this area. Many researchers have been involved in research planning workshops.
- Communications which assist in anticipation of problems and seeking alternative solutions prior to problem development. Generally, it is agreed that the grade applied to the CRSP work in this area would be a B+. This has been the area in which learning has taken place as the process has developed. The key to anticipating problems is communication and the ongoing procedures developed by the ME. These procedures have improved since the beginning of 1998.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The current series of publications should be continued while consideration should be focussed on generating very specific reports which develop the wider picture of how BASIS work contributes to the objectives of the USAID global office. Specific relationships between BASIS in-progress work and results need to be presented showing the connection to overall USAID objectives. The reason for preparing this type of publication is twofold: (1) such reports are needed as 'bench marks' to measure progress towards overall goals and global concerns and; (2) the political value of such reports are self evident and as such should be addressed.

During the evaluation interviews in August 1998, the BASIS administration indicated that they intended to put a survey page into every publication in order to assess the value and usage of the item. While this is an excellent approach, it usually does not produce the number of responses desired. In addition, in order to evaluate the responses, a statistical framework should be established and utilized. It is recommended that the BASIS management team give careful consideration to investigating other mechanisms of gathering data that may be less time consuming while being productive.

While it is generally agreed that the publication of research is highly desirable, one must also consider costs. Questions about publication with local groups, peer review, joint publications, etc., need to be addressed. BASIS management has expressed the desirability to put all printed materials on the website but recognize that at present there is not enough person power to do this. Additional staff time is needed to systemically provide input to the website. Currently, print is still the basic media for the BASIS publications. Determination needs to be made as to the most

effective media for the research to be published and the assistance required to carry out the procedure.

At this time 140 copies of a 45 page document costs \$500 to bring to publication. In order to justify this level of cost, market research is needed as to which audience is targeted for each publication. Some documents are suited for in-project communications and these should be produced as cheaply as possible since by their nature they should be frequently reviewed and viewed as ongoing working documents. Some publications should be distributed to USAID Missions on a routine but targeted basis. This set of publication issues should be addressed by the Technical Committee with data provided by BASIS management.

The website could be very useful to this project. The figures for June 1998 show that during that month there were 280 hits with 40% of those coming from outside of the United States. This information needs to be included in the project annual report as it shows interest in the project and indicates information spread. It is important to note the requirement to update the information on the web frequently. This need, in addition to limited person power to work on the web, are issues that should be addressed by the Technical Committee with reference to getting the 'best bang for the buck'.

There is a real need to develop guidelines for communication with Missions. While the USAID Project Officer leads in this area, the ME will need to provide input/suggestions in order to 'sell' the program. In addition to communicating with the Missions, there is also a need to communicate with AID/Washington personnel. The best way to accomplish this would be for CRSP representatives to visit Washington frequently and meet with AID personnel. However, due to the budget constraints, CRSP leadership asks how to justify visits to Washington at the expense of possible research activities. It is important to review this situation and determine the most effective and efficient ways to communicate with all targeted groups.

IV. EVALUATION OF FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

A. FUNDING OF FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

1. OBSERVATIONS

There appears to be general support from all of the CRSP programs for an increase in funding. Wisconsin is leading the effort to get more funding. The funding for the past year was not increased but remained fairly steady. It appears that if funding is to be increased, Wisconsin will have to continue to actively push for additional funding.

Clearly, an additional issue which will impact the CRSP add-ons and ultimately funding, will be the activities of the BASIS IQC. It appears that the IQC will be helpful in the area of short term technical assistance. However, it remains to be seen as to exactly how the Missions will decide to use either the CRSP or IQC. Specifically, the trick will be how to define technical assistance as opposed to research. In an environment of limited funding the challenge will be to accurately assign activities. It is unclear at this point whether the procedure for identifying appropriate activities has been developed.

One concern which must be addressed is the logical result of limited funding. Specifically in a situation without a fully funded management unit there is a risk that the CRSP will not be able to investigate areas for which resources are not available. This environment argues against making decisions as to inquiry areas based solely on research considerations. The result may be that opportunities which could open other research topics are not explored due to the funding issues.

It appears that the competitive grants programs may be an area which could provide opportunities for matching funds. It will be important to attract researchers with non-Federal grants, who can incorporate the research with built-in indicators and focus on short term results which would be enhanced by the ongoing research. This appears to be an area which will require difficult balancing and one which should be addressed in the future.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since both the CRSP and IQC are administrated from the same USAID office, it is recommended that the guidelines be reviewed carefully in order to articulate specific decision making procedures which will be transparent and relatively routine. The possibility of conflict is obvious in this area.

Consideration of the most effective management structure of the CRSP should be part of the planning activities with input from the Technical Committee, Board of Directors, and USAID, together with reference to lessons learned on other CRSPs. Topics to address include the unique nature of the BASIS CRSP, the structure of institutions which are members of CARMA, funding of a ME which will be adequate to meet CRSP needs, add-on implications, and matching fund issues, as well as other relevant topics.

B. ADEQUACY OF CURRENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. OBSERVATIONS

Management and tracking of the BASIS budget is done by the ME. The University provides back stopping and the financial management (invoices, payments etc.) tasks are carried out by the University system. The invoice system includes initial review and approval wherein the ME assures budget adherence, accuracy etc. then the invoice is submitted to the University financial office for payment. Generally, two weeks is the normal time between receipt of an invoice until the check payment is sent.

It appears that the procedures which have been developed for financial management of the CRSP are sound and workable. These procedures have not been examined in detail by the evaluators but the University system is well established and routinely subjected to government audit requirements.

One problem which appears to be part of the invoice system is related to the non-U.S. research activities. Basically the problem is the lack of sufficient documentation to support invoices. The ME has recognized this issue and has addressed it with the development of procedures which will assist.

Previously there were some timing problems relative to the budget approval by USAID and the work phases of the CRSP. Part of the confusion was because funding allocation was delayed. During the past several months USAID and the ME working together developed a sequence of work plans, allocation approvals and implementations which addressed the previous timing problems. Currently the money allocation and CRSP work plan process is in sync. Other CRSPs prepare high and low budgets for AID review. BASIS may need to consider such a procedure if the problem arises again.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The External Evaluation Panel does not have a recommendation to make in the area of financial management, policies and procedures.

C. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

1. OBSERVATIONS

Generally it appears that some of the collaborating institutions are contributing financially to the project. Wisconsin appears to be contributing the most at this point. Ohio State is also doing well in the area of contributions. Some of the collaborating institutions are 501 (c) 3 and therefore it is difficult for them to contribute. This results in uneven pressure on the part of non - 501 (c) 3 designated organizations.

Currently there appears to be some changes in the pipeline which will help the financial contribution situation. At least one collaborating institution revised a previous policy which did not allow for matching. Other organizations are also reviewing the situation.

Clearly the solution relative to the collaborating institutions will vary from situation to situation. The question which must be answered by future assessment relates to sustainability of the contributions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications of the matching requirement and the collaborating institutions need to be examined together with the requirements for CRSP management. Please see more complete recommendations in IV, A which relates to this topic.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF BASIS

1. OBSERVATIONS

Due to the nature of the CRSP which includes multiple strategies as well as different activities in a number of sites and the need to deal with various institutions it is obvious that the need for intense management is a basic requirement. The management structure for the BASIS CRSP programs is unique when compared to other CRSP programs. The add-on situation, as well as the fund matching mechanism as applied to BASIS makes this CRSP different from the previously established CRSPs. The matching funds requirement, together with the limited funding for BASIS, results in a program which struggles to provide the appropriate level of management structure.

According to the ME staff, in addition to the funding situation, the nature of the subject matter, requires more technical leadership in the ME. There are some differing opinions within CRSP personnel as to the level of ME management required. The balance between adequate fiscal administration, technical direction, funding requirements/limitations, is a challenge to the lead institution. Generally, the BASIS personnel and administrators at Wisconsin agree that it is surprising that the management arrangement, including the funding factors, has worked at all because it is basically complicated. Previously established relationships and experience working with complex projects which the Land Tenure Center possessed was of assistance in making the BASIS structure work.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Please see second recommendations in IV, A which addresses the administrative and management structure of BASIS.

Generally, the competitive grants guidelines need to be tightened and coordinated closely with objectives. It is the evaluator's understanding that this process is currently underway. It is recommended that these guidelines be developed and shared with relevant units.

V. EVALUATION OF BASIS CRSP AS A WHOLE

1. OBSERVATIONS

USAID objectives and the goals of the Global office are important to the justification of CRSP activities. It appears that presently, the CRSP has not directly linked the USAID objectives to corresponding CRSP activities. While one can read between the lines in CRSP reports and realize that the USAID goals are actually being addressed, it is not as clearly articulated as it should be. For example, in Southern Africa the AID objectives include a goal to reduce conflict and since land rights is obviously a basic area of stress, it is important to show graphically how CRSP activities address this area of conflict.

The BASIS Results Framework document which is dated August 1998 is well done and needs to be more fully developed. It is planned that this document will be fleshed out during the upcoming year.

The CRSP standing committees appear to be functioning. The Technical Committee meets once a year and in the past, the discussions of this group involved both technical and administrative issues. Recently it appears that technical issues have come to the forefront. Since the TC membership is made up of research leaders there are some vested interests. A couple of issues related to the TC are as follows:

- The TC Chair has always been a member of the technical committee. While it is important to have a leader with technical expertise, it may be useful to have a facilitator who is not involved in the CRSP on a daily basis to guide the TC to decisions.
- The specific role of the regional research leaders and impact on progress to objectives is an area which needs to be reviewed in depth.

The Board of Directors met in May 1997 and the next meeting is scheduled for October 1998. Not all of the members of the BOD are members of CARMA institutions. It does not appear that service on the Board requires a large investment of time on the part of the Directors. The CRSP does not compensate the Board members for their time. All of the Board members are experts in the subject matter field but most have limited experience with the CRSP mode of operation.

The External Evaluation Panel membership was not finalized until 1998. This delay was due to a number of reasons, most of which were beyond the control of CRSP personnel. The EEP met during August 1998.

The CARMA involves 16 institutions. The participation of the institutions varies and is relatively uneven. The need to keep all CARMA members informed of CRSP work is a continuing task of the ME. The ME keenly recognizes the importance of this communication and they are doing a good job getting information out.

One upcoming concern relates to the implementation of the BASIS IQC. Due to the fact that the BASIS CRSP is the first to have a separate IQC administrated by another contractor, the procedures for working in this situation have not been developed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that the CRSP immediately address the relationship between USAID/Global office objectives and the work of the CRSP. It is recommended that future technical reports include a section showing this relationship. In addition, it is recommended that the ME prepare a trifold which, in a concise manner, shows the CRSP activities (on going, as well as planned and potential) in direct relationship/connection to USAID goals. It is suggested that the trifold be distributed to Missions as well as relevant USAID/Washington offices. It is further recommended that this trifold be prepared and distributed as soon as possible.

Further development of the BASIS Results Framework is encouraged. It is recommended that the next edition of this document be developed soon and should contain performance indicators. Consideration of utilizing the Framework in the trifold presentation suggested in the first recommendation in this section.

In addition to recommendations presented in other sections of this evaluation, it is important that as the project moves into a high performance-results focused implementation period, consideration of several issues including:

- the extent to which research will push the agenda,
- the need to incorporate USAID global objectives into the regional research programs,
- the role and responsibility of the technical committee,
- leadership of the technical committee,
- the exact role of the regional research leaders,
- USAID Mission preference for immediate results,
- funding constraints may require decisions as to identification of programs to be terminated, and
- evaluation of regional programs with reference to articulation of objectives, funding, development of plans, progress on work plans, relationship to host country institutions and evidence of institutionalization.

It is recommended that CRSP leadership consider the possibility (advantages and disadvantages) of appointing a non-technical committee member to chair the Technical Committee. Since the TC is so important to the work of the CRSP, it is vital to structure the group so that a focus on technical issues is easily implemented. The ME has generated some procedures for the TC and these should be reviewed and finalized.

The question as to role of the present regional research leaders vs. that of principal investigator was discussed briefly by the evaluators. This issue is of major importance as it involves decisions/directions in areas such as planning, funding, objectives, benchmarks etc. It is recommended that the project address this issue.

It is recommended that a concise presentation on the CRSP concept be prepared for the next BOD meeting. This recommendation is made in reference to the comment made in meetings in the ME in which they suggested that not all of the members of the BOD were familiar with the

concept/history etc. of the CRSP. In addition, it will be important to involve USAID representation in the upcoming BOD meeting.

In order for the External Evaluation Panel to be knowledgeable about the work of the project it is important for the ME to continue to provide information/reports/publication to the EEP members on an ongoing basis. It is recommended that whenever possible, a representative of the EEP be involved, as an observer, in standing committee meetings and/or major planning/strategy meetings.

It is recommended that the BASIS CRSP and BASIS IQC relationship/procedures be addressed relatively soon by USAID. Specifically the following issues should be reviewed:

- The overlap in work must be reviewed in detail and concrete guidelines established to avoid conflict in this area.
- The amount of work required by the USAID Project Officer for the CRSP is considerable. Currently, the plan is for the same Project Officer to manage the IQC as well. This needs to be reviewed very carefully in terms of amount of work, continuity of personnel, plan for long term staffing, institutional memory etc. The situation must be reviewed periodically and monitored for emerging issues. Structure will be important and must be addressed soon.
- Linkages between the CRSP and IQC will need to be developed. The AID Project Officer would be the logical person to provide leadership in the development of appropriate linkages.